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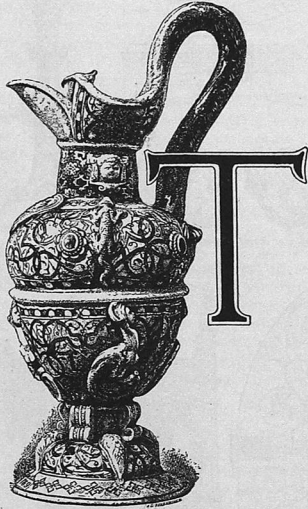
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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

DECORATIVE COMPOSITION.

Translated from the French of HENRI MAYEUX, Architect to the French Government, and Professor of Decorative Art in the Municipal Schools of Paris.



PART II.—PRACTICE.

MATERIALS USED IN DECORATION.

THE first part of this work deals with the theoretical side of decorative art; it remains now to note the various materials used in ornament, as well as the effect they produce, according as this or that material is selected.

This important principle, touched upon before, must be studied both in relation to a just conception of the object to be represented, as well as the nature of the material at command, since this will greatly modify the form,

whilst neglect of its potentialities will result in disaster. Consequently the artist should guard against painfully imitating the effect that strictly belongs to another material, and which will not have the same fitness out of its natural place. Such would be a gate, Fig. 173, where, from a mistaken notion of unity, all sense of fitness would be discarded by carrying the design on stone and wood alike; seen in A, corrected in B. These remarks particularly apply to designers, who, to considerations of usefulness, of expediency, and of the limitations imposed upon them by the material at hand, must aim at clothing their ideas with interest and with as much grace as these restrictions will permit, so as to raise their compositions above the level of mere industrial products.

I.—STONE, MARBLE, GRANITE AND PORPHYRY.

Calcareous stone, either hard or soft, is one of the materials most generally used in buildings, fountains, columns and balustrades, in monumental vases and finials of every kind. It is first cut into large blocks by heavy blows dealt with a pickaxe and sledgehammer, and then hollowed out with gentle blows so as not to split the mass, and cut, moulded, carved, and polished off on the surface with a chisel, etc.

Hard stone and marble admit of higher polish and more elaborate work than softer and looser materials. With patience and gentle well-regulated blows the chisel is driven by a light hammer, producing the broader or heavier lines; with the borer, deep or shallow channels are cut, as well as minute and delicate patterns of great beauty, the effect of which may be enhanced by opposing highly polished or filled parts to dull or plain ones.

The greater or less degree of ornamentation must be regulated by the material employed and the destination of the art object. Thus, in a vase of solid stone intended as a finial in a building of a certain importance, and which we know will be viewed from afar, refinement of make would be superfluous and lost to the sight; hence if the general effect of outline and the details are pleasing and appropriate to the material, the artist will have done enough to satisfy decorative requirements, Fig. 174. In this spirit were conceived the stone monuments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and if their outward aspect is somewhat heavy, it undoubtedly harmonizes better with stone than the sunk delicate details of the perforated pinnacles of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; for their ruinous state is sufficient proof of the absurdity of fine work in such a position.

Roman marble work is marked by breadth of expression and make which are exceedingly satisfactory. This is very well seen in their funeral urns, bowls, monumental vases, Fig. 175, tripods, Fig. 176, and in the finer decorative candelabra which have come down to us.

The traditions of imperial Rome were continued in Italy throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Italian work of this period is distinguished by exquisite taste and consummate knowledge of the capabilities of the material used, a principle which is not observable in the art productions of Italians of the present day, in which minute and over-delicate execution are the chief characteristics.

In window frames care must be exercised to make the openings sufficiently large to let in as much light as possible, leaving plain and strong bands uncut to support the work. This is well seen in the Roman *claustra*, in the Byzantine, Arabic, and especially Moorish window frames, in which pretty patterns are carved in soft plaster easy of repair, and often of marvellously delicate workmanship, Fig. 177.

Hard stones, such as granite, porphyry, and jasper, require much patient labor, and details can hardly be obtained away from the mass. Fine grained marble is not found in Egypt, therefore hard and soft calcareous stone, or the harder porphyry, basalt, and especially granite, were used in her monumental works. The rigid and almost flat treatment of most Egyptian compositions is accounted for by the constant danger the artist was in of shivering the work he wished to represent to pieces. Consequently, statues were planned so as to run the least risk of such catastrophe; their pose was generally quiet, the hair fast to the shoulders, the arms and legs reserved, Fig. 178, or they disappear in the drapery, whilst a pilaster-like stand supports the whole, yielding a convenient space for inscriptions. Similar supports are not used in bronze statuettes: for they are of easier execution and in no danger of breakage. As might be expected, their modeling is finer and their treatment marked by a degree of freedom never found in those worked in hard stone.

Roman imitations of Egyptian monumental works are incongruous, like all imitations, lacking the very qualities which it was intended to secure, and which make the monoliths of Egypt so imposing and satisfactory.

II.—WOOD, EBONY AND IVORY.

It is almost superfluous to mention that woods are of very different quality and usefulness. In Europe the oak has the pre-eminence, for if it cannot be cut in every direction, nor so finely carved as walnut, it is of much longer duration, and the only one susceptible of being worked into scrolls, foliates, floral and animal forms, whilst retaining its beautiful massive aspect. These characteristics of the oak were fully recognized by the Romans, with whom one of its names, *robur*, was synonymous with strength, hardness, power, and strength.

In England oak panelling, oak flooring, oak chests, and other pieces of furniture were extensively used during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when a large proportion of the country was covered with oak forests. Of the old pieces still preserved, a chest of the time of King John may be mentioned. We have some curious records of the endurance of particular wood structures. The cedar roof of the famous temple of Diana of Ephesus was intact at the end of four centuries. The roof beams of the temple of Apollo at Utica were of cedar, and still sound after twelve hundred years. The beautiful open roof of Westminster Hall, said to be of chestnut, dates from Richard II, and is still in good preservation.

Woods have not escaped the whims of fashion; thus in olden times our furniture was chiefly made of oak and walnut, which were replaced by mahogany, and in rare instances by satinwood, ebony, rosewood, etc.; now the list of ornamental woods is much enlarged, including gray maple, Hungarian yew, olive, ash, Amboyna, and many more.

Fine woods, used in the form of veneer, *i.e.* cut in very thin sheets, such as the citron, apple, cherry, plum, holly, beefwood, Coromandel, locust-tree, zebra, yacca, Palmyra, nutmegwood, bamboo, cane, Japanese woods, etc., owing to their costliness are only found in the houses of the wealthy.

Among the common tools used for working woods are the plane, beam-compass, the gouge and chisel; to these may be added the lathe, which seems to have been employed from the earliest times, and is met with in Egypt, in Babylonia and other countries.

Our space forbids us to do more than merely draw attention to the various modes by which beams, wood furniture, paneling, and the like are pieced together.

Framing joints, used in the construction of roofs and centers of bridges, are always made on the principle of a *tenon* and *mortise*; that is, one of the pieces to be joined is cut away so as to have a small projection called *tenon*, and a cavity called *mortise* formed in the other piece to receive this *tenon*. Sometimes *tenons* are cut very short, so as not to pass through the other piece; when, to prevent lateral displacement, notably when the pressure is oblique, a bolt or iron strap is commonly used.

Timbers may be connected longitudinally by simply bringing the two pieces end to end, placing a short piece on each side, and bolting through these short pieces and the main beams. But when nicety is required beams are connected lengthwise by *scarfing*, *i.e.* by cutting away half of the substance of each portion or beam, and the cut portions being brought together, are fastened by screws, bolts, straps or wedges. In constructing the scarf, care must be exercised to provide for the strain the piece is likely to sustain, either lengthwise or in a transverse direction.

Beams may be connected by *cogging*, when a shallow notch

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ILLUSTRATIONS TO DECORATIVE COMPOSITION, BY HENRI MAITREUX.

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is cut out of the under surface of the beam, and a similar notch is cut in the wallplate to receive the beam.

Two pieces are said to be *lapped* together when a *portion* of each is cut away and the surfaces brought together.

Joints of every description, whether brought to bear on beams, the framework of doors, lintels, sills, cabinets, caskets, and the like, must be thoroughly mastered if it is wished to produce artistic furniture. Fig. 179.

Carved foliated subjects should be well kept together by judicious ties, and the finer parts framed within the more solid ones.

The artist should not strive to invest wood fabrications with unduly fine and delicate details, which would be inappropriate, and at best can only please the ignorant; nor should the general structure of any composition disappear under elaborate and rich ornament.

In the case of pattern-making and cabinetwork, it is most important that the wood should be well seasoned and of proper dimensions, so as to avoid warping, splitting, and twisting, which will ruin the best work. This is well exemplified in the large panels of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where unsightly splits and shrinkage are of frequent occurrence. These defects are never met with in mediæval work.

As a rule, bolts, straps, screws, and the like should be employed in preference to glue; which looks better at first, but is apt to get out of order in a damp climate, causing the pieces to fall out. The Egyptians, with true instinct, used wooden joints in their furniture; seen in a chair preserved in the Louvre collection, a cast of which is in the South Kensington Museum. The British Museum is rich in specimens of Egyptian chairs; while on the monuments of Khorsabad, unearthed by Sir H. Layard, "we find representations of chairs supported by animals and by human figures, sometimes prisoners. In this they resemble the armchairs of Egypt, but seem to have been more massive."

Veneering, or the art of covering a cheap wood with thin slices of a more ornamental character, laid down with care, must be referred back to the time of Pliny. It was doubtless suggested by the extravagant prices that were given for solid tables of precious woods. Cicero is said to have paid £9,000 for one table only.

Northern countries are very rich in wood panelling and wainscoting of all kinds, but the most beautiful examples met with in various collections are of Eastern origin. The South Kensington Museum possesses numerous specimens, distinguished by delicate carving and *seeming* intricacy in the arrangement of their geometrical designs of excellent effect. Our cut shows an Arabic framework, where woods prepared by the saw or turned in the lathe have been employed, Fig. 180.

To give an account, however summary, of the elaborate and extensive woodwork of the fifteenth century, such as screens, posts covered with tracery, coffer, stall ends in churches, cupboards, and benches in baronial halls, with which England abounds, and which were designed after patterns of window tracery, would carry us far beyond our scope; and for the same reason we cannot do more than mention the remarkable wood furniture and panelling of the Renaissance, conspicuous for bold design and rich ornamentation, Fig. 181. In Fig. 182, representing an Italian bellows, this boldness and surety of hand are well exemplified.

The forms of ornament on wood and other furniture on the continent during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are the egg and tongue and other classical mouldings. In England, a more natural style was introduced by Grinling Gibbons. This artist carved birds, foliage, flowers, fruit, pieces of drapery, and so on, with rare truth and excellence of execution. Examples of his work may be seen over the altar of St. James's Church, as well as in the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral and in many private houses.

Ivory inlay, almost restricted in Europe at the present time to small fancy objects and show pieces, was extensively used by artists of the Renaissance. It is still in great demand in the East, where it originated.

Mouldings, foliage, scrolls, wreaths, pendants, and fruit, either carved separately and fixed with glue or clamps to cabinets, sideboards, wardrobes, and other pieces of furniture, admit of the smallest pieces of wood being used, and great division of labor; but they are not satisfactory, despite undoubted qualities of execution, for they cannot be made to spring from nor harmonize with the background to which they are applied. The moderate cost of such work alone accounts for its extensive use; and that is the best that can be urged in its favor.

Long pieces of wood should be held together by numerous joints, whilst the outline of turned wood should not be made to look like thin metal. Admirable examples of the artistic furniture of all countries, from the earliest times, may be seen in the collection at South Kensington, which should receive the studious attention of the artist.

III.—BRONZE, TIN, AND ELECTRO-BRONZE.

Bronze is an admixture of copper mixed with small quantities

of tin, zinc, and lead. We do not propose entering into the various methods practised by artists at different times for casting in bronze, but will confine ourselves to the simple statement that after the metal has been duly mixed and fused in the furnace, and the requisite "conduits" have been formed, the glowing metal is slowly poured into the mould where it will receive its final shape. The polishing, chasing, filing, chiselling, punching, etc., which the work may require after removal from the mould should be done by the artist himself. That this was the usual practice of artists of the Renaissance is very apparent in their work.

Groups and complicated figures are cast separately and in different pieces, which are afterwards joined by soldering or dovetailing.

Works in high relief, such as the members of a figure, the handles of a vase, clock cases, and all important masses of ornament, are treated in the same manner.

And here we may note that machine stamping with a die is unduly practised in the manufacture of light brass fittings and ornaments of all kinds, which can only result in dry and rigid outlines, no matter how much care is afterwards lavished on the work to soften and polish its surface.

There is no doubt that the earlier method of working bronze into shape was by cold hammering and cutting, which in process of time was aided by heating. Admirable implements, both in make and beauty of form, are found in every collection, and belong to what has been called the Bronze Period. The best examples, perhaps, are those of Egyptian, Greek, and Etruscan origin.

Circular pieces, such as clock wheels and the like, requiring great nicety and precision of outline, are produced by means of a lathe; with art objects, however, casting should be resorted to as more satisfactory.

The abundant use of bronze for cast and beaten work in early times is placed beyond doubt by the numerous examples that have been brought to light by excavations. The large pieces mentioned in ancient records have not been preserved, but the museums of most countries possess a wonderful variety of statuettes, lamps, candelabra, tables, tripods, etc.

The great sculptor, Phidias, is supposed to have begun his artistic career as a worker in bronze; and some of his early productions were in that metal. The system of throwing the whole weight of a figure upon one foot, leaving the other detached from the base, by which a marvelous effect of lightness and elasticity is obtained, is ascribed to him. Such a conception could only originate with an artist who was familiar with the properties of the metal.

The Middle Ages and the Renaissance have left us admirable bronze works, such as groups, figures, medallions, paneling, grating, andirons, Fig. 183, candelabra, etc., of perfect execution and finish; while the censers, Fig. 186, and vessels of Eastern nations are marvels of delicate tracery and richness of invention.

In Italy metal work never completely ceased, notwithstanding her troubles from within and from without, which turned her fair plains into a battlefield for the rest of Europe during a thousand years. The most important and early Christian work in bronze which has been preserved is the statue of St. Peter in the basilica of that name in Rome. Many interesting lamps of bronze, ornamented with Christian symbols, such as the Trinity, the Lamb, the Lion, the Fish, etc., are preserved in the collections of Italian cities, the British Museum, and other places. To name only the most remarkable works would not be possible in a book of this kind, but the wonderful candlestick in the Duomo, at Milan, may be mentioned. In composition it is a mixture of Byzantine and Romanesque. Some of the groups and figures are treated with a freedom in advance of the period, to which they are supposed to belong.

The Germans and Flemings have shown great skill in the casting of bronze. Important monuments of this metal are found throughout the churches of Flanders and Germany, such as door handles, gratings, clock cases, doors, crucifixes, figures, and shrines, ornamented with classic mouldings. The well known shrine of St. Sebald, at Nuremberg, was executed between 1508 and 1519. A cast of this exquisite work is in the South Kensington Museum.

In England ornamental bronze came into use as early as the twelfth century and has extended to our own time, a revival having again taken place within the last few years.

Early English brass is formed of separate pieces shaped to the outline of the figure. Examples of comparatively modern bronze may be seen in the equestrian and standing figures erected in our public squares, some of which, however, are of very doubtful quality and more or less open to criticism.

Admirable bronze work was produced in France during the reigns of Louis XIV, Louis V, and Louis XVI, the excellent modeling and the perfect technique of many of which are models for the student, Fig. 187. The bronze works of the brothers Keller, who flourished under Louis XIV, may be seen at Versailles and elsewhere.

It cannot be too often repeated that elaborate manipulation

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of flesh, bits of drapery, of hair, and the like, will not compensate for defects of casting, and should not be resorted to by the artist.

We have abundant proofs that tin was extensively used in the art work of mediæval times, and among the remarkable examples which have been preserved, the ewers and ornamental plates of Briot may be cited.

Tin is a flexible, soft, and ductile metal; but it does not admit of fine chiselling which may be given to the various parts of a good and careful bronze casting. It is more appropriate to smooth surfaces, which may be relieved by judicious nielling or by sunk design.

Patinas are green, red, brown, or blackish colors, acquired by a metal after long burial in the ground. They are extensively used by the Chinese and the Japanese in their bronzes, which, after many fruitless attempts, have been successfully imitated by French artists. Unfortunately, electro-bronze is apt to tarnish by exposure, so that its use must be restricted to interiors.

IV.—IRON.

When iron leaves the foundry it is taken up by the artisan in the shape of bars, and is then placed on the anvil and worked, with or without a drawing, into twists, scrolls, interlacing bands, and the like, Fig. 183.

In fine hammered and complicated work the various parts are wrought or beaten separately and welded or riveted to the stem. This was the method practised by artisans of olden times,

Augsburg workmanship, and now the property of Lord Radnor, may be mentioned.

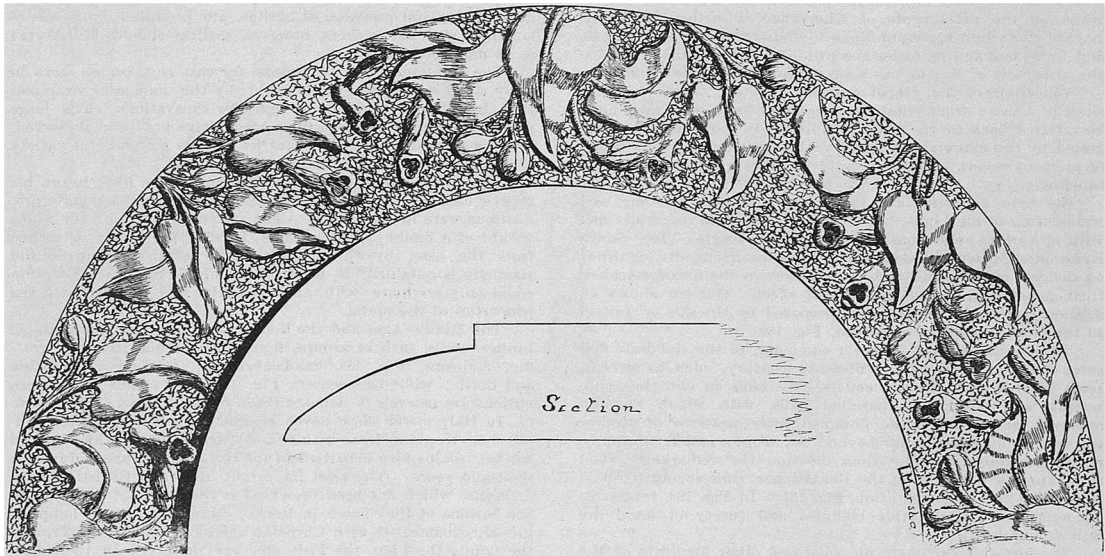
The South Kensington is rich in specimens of fine iron work of all kinds, from the earliest periods of the art to the present day. The finest *repoussé* and chiselled work is found in arms and armor, amongst which Oriental and Italian arms are perhaps the most interesting from an artistic standpoint. Many large works in iron were executed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as the beautiful French gates of the Apollo Gallery at the Louvre, and the screens of Hampton Court, now at South Kensington. The design and the execution of these screens are admirable. The ornamentation consists of the rose, the shamrock, the thistle, ferns, etc., executed with truthfulness and of marvelous effect.

This collection also contains balconies, window gratings (such as are used even at the present day in Spain, Italy, and all over the East), shrines, crosses, door-fittings, etc., some of the specimens dating as far back as 1015, and belonging respectively to Flanders, Germany, France, and in fact to all the civilized countries of the world.

Casting is admirably suited for large and solid work, and owing to its comparative cheapness has replaced wrought iron for common decorative purposes.

Unfortunately, under the erroneous notion of investing it with the appearance of hammered iron, it is frequently covered with elaborate ornamentation of inferior quality.

Among modern specimens may be mentioned the admirable metal work of the Palace at Westminster, and a portion of a



BREAD TRAY IN CARVED WOOD.

and is still the prevailing rule of all good and ornamental English iron work.

But when iron is thinned to extreme fineness, as is often the case with French ornament, the delicate forms are apt to break if welded to the stouter ones; they are, therefore, soldered, pinned, riveted, or brazed on to the stems and scrolls, Fig. 189.

The old artificers confined themselves to simple forms, such as were best suited to the material. In process of time, however, cut, pierced, and chiselled iron work came to be made. This was soon followed by the fine art of chasing in *repoussé*, Fig. 190.

Although iron is a hard metal it is very ductile, and may be hammered on the back, front, and side, and twisted in all directions to form foliage, flowers, stems, labels, and even human forms, Fig. 191.

Beautiful beaten and chiselled handles of swords, handles of daggers, railings, window-guards, doors, hinges, knockers, articles of furniture, and other decorative objects were executed during the whole of the Middle Ages. Several keys, knockers, and hinges, wrought with rare freedom and beauty of design, are still met with in England. Our illustration, Fig. 192, is a successful reproduction of hammered iron work executed in 1251 for the chapel used by Edward I. The floriate hinges of this interesting door are fine examples of wrought iron work. The next cut is an interesting example of old German work, Fig. 193.

Among the remarkable pieces of mediæval iron work that have been preserved, the famous chair made for Rudolf II, of

railing surrounding a tomb in Finchley cemetery, Fig. 194.

The only drawback to iron is its tendency to rust when exposed to the outer air. This may be obviated by applying several layers of paint to its surface, but the fine sharp outline of the work is thereby destroyed. The use of nickel is not open to this inconvenience; the high price, however, which has to be paid must restrict its employment to small ornamental objects. The recent system of applying a layer of copper to large works not requiring close inspection, as fountains and lamp posts, for example, has met with even less success than the old mode of painting.

We will conclude this chapter with a quotation from one who is entitled to speak on the relative merit of French and English beaten metal work.

"The French exceed in taste and effect, but the English excel in hammered iron work. The French make their design strong and effective, but the ornamentation, being of thin iron sheet, is light and elegant, but forms a separate part from the rest of the work, and must decay very soon. Another fault is, that being of thin iron, recourse must be had to riveting or brazing.

"But if iron work is to last a long time it must be welded together or worked from the solid bar, then the leaves may be made sufficiently strong to last a number of years. A good design should allow of this being done, and I think in England good designs do so."

Another artificer agrees that the English "mould better,

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and finish more completely, with the sole use of the hammer, but that the French make great use of files and other finishing tools."

V.—BRASS, COPPER, LEAD, AND ZINC.

The process of hammer-raising, of which mention has been made in our remarks on iron, is effected by a series of blows dealt regularly and evenly so as to keep the shape regular and all parts of equal thickness, care being taken to have the blank sheet of metal of exact size, so that none has to be cut off afterwards. The copper moulds used for jellies, cakes, etc., afford a good example of high relief by hand hammering.

Copper and Latten (yellow brass) are often worked and raised by means of the planisher or by "spinning," *i.e.* moulded with copper burnishers while being turned in the lathe. This method is used alike by tinkers and brass artificers in the production of tin or copper vessels, metal plates, etc., and although it does not strictly belong to art execution, it is frequently associated with it; for here, as with more delicate work, after the vessel is finished the rim, the fluting, and the like are added and touched up by the repairer. When all the corrections are made and the required effect produced, the surface is finished by chiselling or carving of the finer parts, such as flowers, foliage, and all the details requiring skillful execution. The work is completed by *matting* certain portions of the surface, some being left bright and others flat, or retiring, in order to produce texture or variety.

If the vessel is somewhat complicated, exhibiting handles, rings, stems, knobs, etc., such portions have to be raised separately and joined in their place by riveting or brazing.*

The difference between cast and wrought metal consists in this: that the former is generally thick, admitting of rich and elaborate ornamentation; while the thinness of the latter will only bear broad and simple designs, with retreating outlines, so as to avoid sharp and acute edges, well seen in Figs. 195 and 195A, where the treatment is appropriate to the material employed and pleasing in its effect.

The use of copper was known to the early inhabitants of the countries in which the metal is found, and was fashioned into weapons, domestic utensils, etc. From the East have come those shapely coffee pots and ewers, nearly of pure copper, which are the delight of connoisseurs, Fig. 196.

The greater portion of the admirably wrought vessels for church use of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, were of copper gilded with gold, as were those of the Renaissance, many of which are of great beauty of form and ornamentation; nor can it be said that the use of copper ever ceased. Its malleability is peculiarly adapted to the formation of objects of every variety and shape. Its use is seen in our boilers and refrigerating pans, in the sheets that protect the keel of our ships from barnacles and other insidious creatures, as well as in the production of smaller objects, such as stew and warming pans, tea urns, kettles, coinage, medals, etc.

Tin, or white lead, was known in remote times, and still retains its value in the industrial arts when combined with lead and copper. Lead, on account of its extreme ductility, has to be supported by iron or wooden braces; hence, redundant forms should be rejected in order to prevent awkward deformations.

Lead was extensively used during the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, Fig. 197, and even in our own day, in false roofs, finials, and the like. The fountains of Versailles are of lead partly fused and partly wrought, dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Electro and stamped work have dealt a severe blow to artistic metal productions. Many copies of beautiful designs are undoubtedly reproduced at a very moderate cost, and where a plain form only is required stamping is satisfactory enough; but when decorative ornament is introduced the mechanical appliances become apparent, for little or no variety of shape is to be looked for in the designs.

Skillful artisans, too, are becoming every day more scarce, and in a period of hurry, when everything is for mere show, the time cannot be far distant when the fine art of wrought metal will only be remembered as a tradition of the past, or at least for the appreciative few.

Zinc, being the least valuable of all metals, is not usually beaten or wrought, and, as it is rather brittle, its use should be restricted to objects of large dimensions. But its extreme malleability will also prevent its being extensively adopted in architectonic work.

Imitation Paris bronze (cast and wrought zinc) is treated almost in the same manner as the nobler metal; but, however well moulded or cast, it does not admit of the same finish as bronze, and it is foolish to imagine that zinc statuettes, zinc flower pots, zinc stands, and the like, can be decorated, treated with color, or gilded and given the patinas of bronze in a satisfactory manner.

The piercing press does excellent service in the reproduction of a set design, but it is inapplicable to original art work. For these recourse must be had to the fret and the ribbon saw,

which combine the qualities of machine and hand work to such a marvellous degree, that in another age the effect produced would have been attributed to a supernatural power.

The construction of a design pierced by mechanical means should not be the same on a dark as on a light ground, and when the scheme of the design alters the place of the joints, these must be made sufficiently strong to prevent the breaking or twisting of the blank piece, Fig. 198. In principle, curvilinear forms are better adapted to piercing with the fret saw than straight lines, consequently tangent crossings and acute edges should be discarded. The fret saw soon breaks or gets out of order; hence its application is expensive and confined to very thin sheets of iron, or to more ductile metals, such as bronze and zinc, which admit of elaborate designs.

Work done by means of these appliances is in every way more satisfactory than the *cast brass fittings* that were in vogue some years ago, the chief characteristic of which was inferior and wearisome uniformity of design, whereas the plain and pierced surfaces of this style form a pleasing contrast with the surrounding reliefs.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

RECENT NOVEL INTERIORS.

SOME recent specimens of interior decoration in this city call for more than passing comment, representing as they do three different forms of public buildings—the hotel, place of business and the theatre. Though all were done by the Linspar Decorating Company, and though the material employed in all is very largely the same, each is marked by an individuality of style not only as regards design but in color and adaptability to the use intended.

Elsewhere we give sketches of the ceiling and frieze which form a large part of the decorations of Hudnut's new drug store on Broadway, near 20th street. In this, as in the others, the design was made by the artists of the company, and the fresco, linspar work, bronzing and coloring was done by the men in its employ. The field of the ceiling is frescoed in light blue, the ornaments being applied in linspar and bronzed in gold and silver and touched up in colors; the side walls are of a light terra cotta. As good taste would dictate for the decoration of a place devoted to trade, there is nowhere any sign of overloading with ornament, and the whole effect is very rich and tasteful. The lines are graceful, and yet the entire work presents an effect of solidity and permanency, which is admirably adapted to the place and its purposes.

A more ambitious scheme of decoration is to be seen in the new dining-room of the Albemarle Hotel, on Broadway and 21st street. Here the ceiling is in the shape of a long oval with circles at each end. The ground work is frescoed in imitation of tapestry effects, the main pattern consisting of Renaissance scroll work. Except the tapestry painting the entire work is in linspar in relief. The room gives an opportunity for a rich display of color in ceiling, frieze, field and dado which have been admirably handled, and the result is one of the handsomest apartments of the kind in the country.

The New Opera House in 125th street, now in course of completion, will, when finished, add largely to the reputation of the Linspar Company, and will doubtless give theatrical managers some novel ideas in the interior decoration of their houses. The ceiling is beautifully frescoed, the design embodying female figures, flowers and fruits. All the relief work both here and on the side walls are in linspar. The hangings of the boxes and proscenium are in a rich crimson, and the whole interior presents a deliciously warm and home-like aspect. One marked fact connected with all three of these decorative schemes is that no other company could have done all the work, no one else having the facilities or controlling the material employed. We have heretofore spoken of the many advantages possessed by linspar, and our readers, by visiting the places described, can hardly fail to appreciate its wonderful adaptability to various decorative uses.

At the office of the Company, in the building 45 Broadway, can be seen innumerable specimens of linspar in all its varieties of treatment together with proofs of the skill of the Company's designers. Every style of fresco and other decorative painting is done by the Company, and the work in connection with linspar is admirably adapted to the decoration of private houses of every class. Specimen rooms decorated and furnished for residences can now be seen at Sheppard Knapp & Co.'s, 6th avenue, 13th and 14th streets, New York.



* Sometimes a wood or resin core is used for raising the metal.